

CASE Study # 2: Giving Scientific Advice to an IC Director on Extramural Activities

An IC director is interested in a special initiative to encourage the payment of innovative but high-risk applications. He has asked for nominations of innovative applications that have been peer reviewed and approved by Council, but are not within the payline. To sort through the large number of nominations received from IC staff, he has asked the IC's review chief to pull together a selection committee of IC extramural and intramural staff to identify the most innovative applications for his consideration.

Is this permissible?

Given the new specifications for official duty, it is generally permissible for intramural researchers and extramural program, review, and policy staff to serve on this committee.

What protections should be put in place regarding conflicts of interest and confidentiality?

The Review Chief should discuss explicitly the confidential nature of the materials and group discussion, as well as issues pertaining to conflicts of interest. Members should receive, review, and sign the conflict of interest forms used in peer review.

What should the reviewers judge by?

There should be established criteria for judging the merits of the applications, whether or not written critiques are required. These criteria should be available to the nominating staff as well.

Are there any other concerns?

All staff should be clear on who should contact the PI about funding, based on IC determined procedures.

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